

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 7, 10 and 14 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 1, 5, 8, 9, 13 and 15 are amended. Claims 1-6, 8-9, 12-13 and 15 remain actively pending in the case. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the claim is respectfully requested.

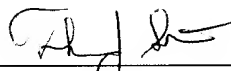
In paragraph 3 on page 4 of the Office Action, claims 1-4, 6, 12 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ejima (U.S. Patent No. 6,188,432) in view of Kawamura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,092,024) further in view of Nagano (U.S. Patent No. 5,561,462). In paragraph 4 on page 5 of the Office Action, claims 5, 9, 13 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ejima (U.S. Patent No. 6,188,432) in view of Kawamura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,092,024).

However, in paragraph 5 on page 7 of the Office Action, claims 7-8, 10, 14-15 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections, but in the interest of expediting prosecution have amended independent claims 1, 5, 9, and 13 to overcome the rejection by incorporating the limitations of objected to claim 7 into independent claims 1 and 5, the limitations of objected to claim 9 into independent claim 10, and the limitation of objected to claim 14 into independent claim 13. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 5, 9, and 13, as amended, are patentable over the cited references. Because claims 2-4, 6 and 8, 12, and 15 depend from claims 1, 5, 9, and 13 respectively, and include the features recited in the independent claim, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-4, 6, 8, 12 and 15 are also patentably distinct over the cited references. Nevertheless, Applicants are not conceding the correctness of the Office Action's rejection with respect to such dependent claims and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that none of the references, taken singly or in combination, disclose the claimed invention. Accordingly, this

application is believed to be in condition for allowance, the notice of which is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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